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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [KCOR](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA: REVOLVING DOOR CONTINUES AT SCANDAL-PLAGUED
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 207

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 369

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a sudden and surprising move, PM Robert Fico nominated Jozef Medved, the Vice Rector of an obscure private university in central Slovakia, to be the next Environment Minister. As was the case with each of his several predecessors, Medved lacks a technical background or any experience relevant to the field of environmental policy. Medved would replace Deputy PM Dusan Caplovic, who was installed as a caretaker minister in August, ostensibly to "clean-up" the troubled ministry. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Medved's nomination comes about two months after Fico sacked his third Minister of Environment, Viliam Tursky, who lasted only three months in the job. The ministry has had numerous well-publicized scandals this year, including the Interblue CO2 emissions tender that may end up costing the GOS several hundred million euros in revenue. By nominating Medved, a member of Fico's Smer political party, Fico has followed through on his vow to take the ministry away from his coalition partner, the Slovak National Party (SNS), in violation of the coalition agreement. Although SNS complained loudly about Fico's decision, they have made it clear they have no intention of leaving the coalition.

[1](#)3. (U) Medved claimed to be as surprised as anyone by the nomination, saying that he had merely submitted his resume to a recruitment agency and the next thing he knew, he was offered the ministerial post. Press speculation regarding his appointment has centered on his relationship with Vladimir Meciar, who leads HZDS, the third party in Fico's governing coalition. Medved served as General Director of Banka Slovakia under Meciar's government in the mid-1990s. He later served on the board of a mortgage company that declared bankruptcy, leaving behind half a million dollars in unpaid taxes.

[1](#)4. (SBU) COMMENT: With this nomination, Fico is signaling that he views the Ministry of Environment to have been successfully purged of corruption. In reality, while Caplovic fired a number of corrupt SNS officials, he has lately backed away from many of the changes he promised when coming to the ministry two months ago. Moreover, by plucking the apparently unqualified Medved--who is completely unknown to the Slovak environmental community--from an obscure university post and entrusting him with one of the most visible and controversial positions in the cabinet, Fico appears most concerned about finding a minister who can be counted on to show personal loyalty.

EDDINS